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CHRISTIANITY
AND
CHURCHISM





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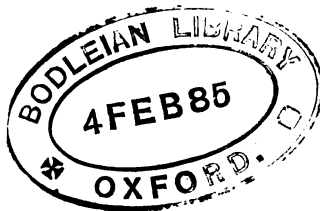
BY
PATRICK ALLAN-FRASER

"When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."—*Ezekiel* xviii. 27.

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CHRISTIANITY

AND

CHURCHISM.

ACCORDING to history, nearly nineteen hundred years have elapsed since the Founder of our faith suffered death because He told the Churchmen of His day that their teaching was not of God. Do the Churchmen of our day—those who take the name and claim the world's respect as the ministers of Jesus Christ—furnish any, even the least, evidence that they are in truth His ministers, or that they teach what He taught?

Have we had any proof given to us that an undoubting belief in, and an honest observance of, the rites and ceremonies of any Church

known to us will confer upon mankind the advantages which our Saviour told would follow obedience to the laws and commandments of God?

If we would but give to these questions our earnest attention, and permit observation and experience to guide us, we should soon, I believe, be able to perceive that those questions which have agitated, and which are still allowed to agitate, society in the name of Christianity, do not vitally concern mankind as Christians. Those questions do, however, most unquestionably concern, socially and pecuniarily, all who are professionally interested as teachers and upholders of the opinion that there is a saving or restoring moral power inherent in, and that will reach us from and through, the observance of the rites and ceremonies of our so-called Christian Church.

Before proceeding further, I must here entreat that the reader will understand and bear in mind that my object in writing this essay is not to encourage doubt regarding the truths of Christianity as these were told by

our Saviour Jesus Christ, but to show that that oral and emotional supplication for, and dependence upon, supernatural aid, which constitute the essence of our religious worship, belong not to Christianity but to Church theology or Churchism.

Let it be borne in mind that true Christianity appeals in proof of its having disclosed to man the only way by which he may become better and wiser, and ultimately attain to the power of being practically righteous, not to the speculative opinions of professional Churchmen, ancient or modern, learned or unlearned, but to the fruits borne of obedience to the instructions given by its great Founder.

Any one who will calmly weigh the sayings of our Saviour, as these have come down to our time, although in too many instances obscured by superstition and priestcraft, may see this, and also learn that He told all men to seek for salvation—in other words, the power of becoming practically righteous, not by observing the rites and ceremonies of any Church, but by rendering practical obedience

to those natural laws by and through which all men live, move, and have their being.

Hence I would argue that the teaching of Jesus Christ was not of that spiritual character Churchmen say it was, but that it was essentially materialistic in its nature. In order that we may see this, and learn that a belief in the necessity for supernatural aid is not Christian, we have but to bear in mind that it was in our Saviour's denial of supernatural power that His teaching differed most from that of the popular preachers and teachers of His time ; that while those teachers and preachers taught dependence upon supernatural aid, He taught that the power of living practically righteous lives would be given to all who would obey the laws and commandments of God His Father—in other words, that moral regeneration would as a natural result follow obedience to God's will as expressed in His natural laws. Keeping these facts in view, we may readily see that true Christianity is not a mystical faith, and that that "mystery of godliness" spoken of by

professional Churchmen belongs not to true Christianity, but to Church theology, or Churchism.

Although we have not, and cannot now have, the precise words spoken by our Saviour Jesus Christ, we may nevertheless discover, from the ideas conveyed in His discourses as these have come down to us, that He did not seek to glorify Himself, as professional Churchmen do, but to make known to all men the great truth that the Creator of the universe, His Father, and the Father of all living, had from the beginning of the world provided natural means for restoring to righteousness those who, by their own and their parents' non-observance of His laws and commandments, might lose the power of being practically righteous. In order that we may have a clear perception of this truth, and understand what was the real nature of our Saviour's teaching, it is essential that we should bear in mind that at the time He appeared there existed in the Jewish mind a strong superstitious belief in the existence of an all-seeing yet unseen per-

sonal God, who worked for the good of man, not by and through unalterable natural laws, but by an arbitrary exercise of supernatural power, and with whom those who were of the priesthood claimed to possess, in right of their office, propitiatory power and influence.

That this belief in the supernatural propitiatory power possessed by the priesthood then led to much presumptuous familiarity on the part of those would-be divinely appointed instructors in righteousness, may be gathered from what we find given as our Saviour's teaching in His Sermon on the Mount. We find therein that He said, "Not every one who saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father, which is in heaven." In these words we have clearly conveyed to us an idea of the vast difference that necessarily exists between saying and doing the will of God; and were it not for the prejudice that has been created in our minds by the teaching of Churchmen, we should have less difficulty than we have in perceiving that these words

conveyed to those who heard them a denial of priestly intercessional influence with God, and a command to all who would be restored to righteousness, and thereby saved from the consequences of their own and their parents' non-observance of God's natural laws and commandments, to rest their hopes not upon oral supplication, personal or vicarial, but upon the practical observance of those natural laws by which the will of God is made manifest to man, and which were at the beginning of the world made for the growth and continuance of righteousness in the human mind.

"By their fruits ye shall know them," are words which we are told were spoken by Jesus Christ in order that in all time all men might know who are and who are not entitled to take His name and claim the world's respect as His ministers; and if we will search the pages of history from even the time of Constantine down to our own days for information regarding the fruits borne of the teaching of those who have taken His name, sought and obtained high social position and pecuniary

reward as His ministers, we shall not find that the fruits borne of their teaching have, even when most sincere, been Christian in character; on the contrary, we may discover that their sincere teaching has too often resulted in fanatical ravings, arrogance, and dark insanity.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you,” are words which, if calmly considered, will lead us to understand that the fruits of obedience to the laws and commandments of God will be wisdom and goodness—in other words, practical Christianity. But I must here observe, that unless we have a right understanding of what is meant by obedience to the laws and commandments of God, we shall not readily comprehend wherein true Christianity differs from Churchism.

Unfortunately for us, all our professional instructors in righteousness will assume that Christianity consists of rites and ceremonies, and that we are Christians or not Christians as we observe or do not observe those rites and

ceremonies. Yet a little consideration might suffice to show that doing the will of God is not merely observing the rites and ceremonies of any Church, or in rendering obedience to the laws and commandments of Churchmen.

Let us keep ever before us the great truth that before any man can possibly be a Christian indeed, he must be a practical doer, and not a sayer merely, of what the will of God is. I would here remark, that as the discoveries of science have shown us that men are wise or foolish, good or bad, as they possess or do not possess sound brains, it is surely our duty to ourselves and to God to endeavour to understand how we may increase the soundness and lessen the unsoundness of our physical brains. Yet, although this appears to be our plain duty, our professional instructors in righteousness will not have it so. Clergymen practically assume that, as Christians, we must not expect to be restored to righteousness by natural means; that we must practically assume that our Creator will, in return for vicarial oral and emotional sup-

plication, use supernatural means for restoring to righteousness all those who may have personally and practically offended against His laws and commandments.

Now, however essential a belief in the efficacy of vicarial intercession may be for the glorification and pecuniary interest of the clergy, that such was not believed in by religious men in the Old Testament times may be learned from what we find recorded in Scripture. In the fourteenth chapter of Ezekiel we find it stated no fewer than four times that no man can do more than save his own soul by his righteousness; in other words, that vicarial intercession will not avail us in the work of salvation. That each individual human being who would be restored to righteousness must by his own personal observance of God's commandments obtain pardon for his offences committed against the laws of his Creator.

Here it may be said, by such of my readers as believe in Churchism: All this is in direct contradiction of what we find stated in the New Testament; that therein we are told

Jesus Christ practised oral and emotional supplication and advised dependence upon supernatural aid. But let it be borne in mind, that the accounts we have given in the New Testament of what the Saviour said and did were not written by Him nor in His time, but long after His death by Churchmen, who were not only highly superstitious and strongly imbued with a love of the marvellous, but were directly interested in upholding a belief in the dogmas of the new religion then being established in the Saviour's name.

It might assist us in having a more correct opinion than we appear to have regarding what Jesus Christ did teach, and of the great extent of Church mythology mixed up with what has come down to us as His teaching, if we would keep ever in our mind that true Christianity is not a religion founded on speculative opinion; that it is by the fruits borne of our obedience or non-obedience to the natural laws of our Creator that we may know whether our doings are or are not Christian in character. When we overlook these facts, and assume

that speculative opinion will guide us to a right understanding of what constitutes true Christianity, we speedily lose ourselves amongst the wranglings of Churchmen, and go far away from what was the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Until we see this, and learn to view the disputes concerning Church doctrines which do duty among clergymen as Christianity as questions involving merely the professional status and social position of professional Churchmen, we shall not greatly promote the heavenward progress of humanity. We may rest assured that so long as we will assume that difference of opinion regarding Church doctrine will influence the moral and intellectual well-being of those not directly interested socially as Churchmen, we shall not be greatly able to understand wherein true Christianity differs from Church theology.

“Except ye be born again ye cannot see the kingdom of heaven,” are words which, when carefully considered, will disclose to us the vast difference that exists between the religion founded by our Saviour Jesus Christ

and any, or every speculative faith. These words tell us that Christianity or true righteousness can only result from a constitutional power of rendering obedience to God's laws and commandments, and that that constitutional power of rendering such obedience can only be regained by natural means—by our being, in the figurative language of Scripture, born again.

If we would but ponder these facts, and thereby learn what constitutes obedience and disobedience in a Christian sense, and also the nature of, or what is meant by, rewards and punishments by our Creator, we should certainly be nearer to gaining a proper knowledge of wherein consists the vast difference that exists between the God of Churchmen and that God who is the Author and Preserver of our being. When we overlook these facts, and assume that the one true God, the God of creation, dispenses His rewards and inflicts His punishments after the manner of human lawgivers and judges, we not only display our ignorance of the Creator and His ways, but

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we disclose the source of that inefficiency visible in Churchism or Churchmanship as the means of making men better and wiser.

Until we see this, and fully realise the great fact that soundness of mind constitutes the real source of practical righteousness, we shall not, I fear, do much towards making apparent the difference that really exists between true Christianity and Church theology. While we continue to assume that we fulfil our duty to our Creator when we attend Church services, build new churches, and augment the livings of clergymen, we shall not greatly aid in the work of lessening crime and misery in the world. We may, by attending to the wants and demands of the clergy, secure for ourselves that conventional respectability accorded by them to all who will attend their services and contribute to their social requirements, but such will not, we may rest assured, lead to an increase of practical godliness amongst men, which is really what the world stands most in want of at the present time.

I venture to say, that if soundness of mind

were deemed a necessary qualification for all who desire to enter the service of the Church, clergymen would soon be more entitled than they are to call themselves servants of God as our instructors in righteousness; but observation alone may suffice to teach that soundness of mind is not only not deemed an all-important qualification, but that the would-be clerical mind is frequently rendered unsound by the strain to which it is subjected when acquiring that scholastic proficiency now demanded from all who will seek high social elevation in the service of the Church. This leads me to observe, that perhaps at no time in the history of our race has soundness of mind been in greater danger from the practice of educationists than in our own time.

At present, our educationists practically ignore the fact that the human brain, when young, cannot with impunity be forced into activity in thinking; that the capability of reasoning does not exist in very young minds or brains. Moreover, we may learn by observation that in proportion as the mind is over-

tasked in early life, so will sound intelligence and moral power be found wanting in after years. If we would ponder these facts, and allow observation to teach us in this matter of mental and moral training, we might learn why we so very rarely see that precocious intelligence produced by a too early forcing of the intellectual faculties showing itself in soundness of mind in middle life, and why we so frequently see those who gave great promise of intellectual greatness in early life becoming mentally commonplace and lagging behind, in mental strength, those who were intellectually their inferiors at school or college.

We hear much from our professional instructors in righteousness as to the vast importance of their work as the guardians of the souls of men, but they never enable us by their teaching to comprehend clearly what they mean by the soul. They certainly do lead us to believe that the soul has a separate existence from the body ; that it will live after the body dies, and be punished or rewarded

according to its doings while in connection with the body ; but beyond this we are not told by clergymen further than that they, in right of their office, possess a certain power in connection with the soul, the nature of which we cannot understand ; and if we allow the discoveries of science to guide us, and arrive at the conclusion, as we certainly will do, that the mind or sentient part of our being has an intimate connection with our material brain, we find ourselves denounced by the clergy as bad men—"Materialists and infidels." Now, why should this be ? Why should clergymen, because they believe they are right in their thinking, denounce as bad men all who may conscientiously differ in opinion from them ?

That the mind or soul in man has an intimate connection with his physical brain is a fact that has been undeniably established by the discoveries of science. And since this is so, and since we thereby know that it has pleased our Creator to cause mind or thought to arise from, or be in close connection with,

the material brain of man, why do we imagine that to believe the evidences of our senses is an offence against our Creator? It would be well for our clerical instructors in righteousness if they would bear in mind that, as human beings, we cannot possibly derive any benefit from instruction which is beyond our reason to comprehend, and that before we can derive any benefit from their services in saving our souls we must have some knowledge of the soul—what it is, and in what respect it will be benefited by their service.

But instead of puzzling ourselves over the unintelligible definition of the soul as given by the clergy, we will be guided by experience and common-sense, and believe that what is meant by the soul is that sentient part of our being by and through which we become conscious of our existence, and which is sound or unsound as we have obeyed or disobeyed the natural conditions upon which all men hold their moral, intellectual, and physical well-being. If we will do this, we may come to realise the necessity that exists for our

being instructed regarding these ; and if our clerical instructors would thus lead us to know the natural means that have been provided for the growth and continuance of reason in the human mind, we might come to understand and appreciate the value of their services ; but, unfortunately for the cause of true Christianity, our clerical instructors appear unwilling to admit that the mind or soul can be restored to health by natural causes. They, on the contrary, practically teach that to believe that the mind may be restored to righteousness by natural means is rank infidelity, and that to rely upon the supernatural influence of oral supplication is Christianity. Yet, if we would endeavour to disabuse our minds from the effects of Churchism, and allow reason or common-sense to aid us when in search of the true meaning of much that we find stated in the Scriptures, we might sooner arrive at a better understanding than we appear to have of what was the true character of the teaching of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

For example, we are told He said, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Now, if we allow reason to guide us, and interpret these words as meaning, What shall it profit a man if, by over mental exertion in striving after worldly greatness, he loses his reason and becomes permanently insane? we may see more of wherein consisted the superiority of true Christianity over the many speculative faiths that prevailed when our Saviour Jesus Christ appeared.

I would here remark, that of the many hindrances to the growth of practical Christianity that arise out of Churchism, none is more apparent in our own time than that which has arisen from the interpretation usually put upon the Scriptural account of the punishment said to have been awarded to our race for the sins of our first parents. As acting upon their belief in that interpretation, most parents believe, or appear to believe, they cannot do better for their offspring than by lessening the necessity for their earning their daily bread

by the sweat of their face—in other words, by engaging in manual labour. Hence manual labour has come to be deemed a barrier to social elevation and physical idleness a passport to promotion. Our instructors in righteousness would do well to think of this, and refrain from leading young men and young women to imagine that their chief aim and object in life ought to be to endeavour, by means of proficiency in scholastic education, to raise themselves socially above the condition of working men.

Instead of this, the young of all classes ought to be taught that manual labour is in point of fact really necessary for the moral and intellectual well-being of man, and that such labour was not imposed as a punishment for the sins of our first parents—on the contrary, that mental and physical idleness will certainly lead to demoralisation, and that what society stands most in want of in our time is not freedom from manual labour, but that working men and working women should be engaged during their working hours in the performance

of labour requiring more real intelligence and more honesty of purpose than we find characterising the work demanded from them by our men of commercial progress.

I maintain that so long as the working classes are employed in crowded and ill-ventilated factories and workshops, regardless of those conditions upon which Nature will continue sound mental and moral health, and led to take no interest in their work beyond the amount of wages they will receive, so long may we expect to find the mode by which the moral and intellectual elevation of the working classes may be accomplished remaining an unsolved problem.

At present our social reformers are too much given to assuming that the intellectual and moral welfare of the working classes is a work that may be safely left to be accomplished in the evening or during non-working hours, and that during the hours of labour the interests of Capital are of paramount importance. And if the God of Nature would but sanction an arrangement by which obedience to His laws

would be suspended in favour of the interests of Capital during working hours, all might be well; but I fear, however great the men of commercial progress may be, and however important the interests of Capital, yet, notwithstanding, all must render obedience to the laws of God.

I would here say that so long as God's laws of health are disregarded by working men and working women whilst they are engaged in the performance of their daily work, so long will demoralisation and the subsequent degeneracy of mankind be the inevitable result of our so-called progress.

It might assist us in arriving at a better understanding of our duty to God and to ourselves if we would seek to understand better than we appear to do what is meant in Scripture by the kingdom of heaven. "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," are words attributed to our Saviour Jesus Christ, and which, when properly understood, place before us clearly the fact that "the kingdom of heaven" is but a figurative descrip-

tion of that sound condition of mind or soul which will result as the fruit of continuous obedience to the laws and commandments of our Creator. Until we do realise the meaning of these words, we shall not readily comprehend what is meant by that racial ascendancy which will result from obedience to God's commandments continued from generation to generation, and which is figuratively described as being born again.

Here I may be told, that to imagine that our capitalists and men of commercial progress generally will practically admit that the racial ascendancy of man is of more importance to them, or to the whole people of this country, than is the maintenance of its commercial and manufacturing ascendancy is quite utopian, and wholly undeserving of our attention in this truly practical age. But I would remind the reader that our duty as Christians is, not to devote our whole mind or soul towards increasing the commercial and manufacturing importance of this country, *but to endeavour to understand what those laws are, obedience*

to which will make all men better and wiser. Until we do fully understand what those laws are, and learn to obey them, we shall not, I believe, make great progress in knowing wherein consists the difference between God, who is the Author and Preserver of our being, and that God in whom Churchmen believe.

Unfortunately for us, we are too frequently led away from the truth by our professional instructors in righteousness, and made to believe that it is derogatory to our Creator to imagine that offences against His laws and commandments will be pardoned by an observance of His natural laws, and that we display our belief in His power and wisdom most when we assume that He will, in return for oral and emotional supplication, use supernatural means for restoring to health the sick and the dying. Now, without in the least assuming that the clergy intentionally mislead, in order that they may increase their own importance in the work of salvation, the fact that the all-prevailing belief in the necessity for super-

natural power is due chiefly, if not wholly, to the teaching of clergymen, will not, I believe, be questioned by others than themselves. Yet a very little consideration will suffice to show, that the only practical effect of our belief in the necessity for, and the use of, supernatural power is that such enhances the importance of the clergy in their vicarial capacity, and as a consequence leads to arrogance and neglect of individual obedience to the laws of our Creator by them. Furthermore, we are occasionally led by the clergy to imagine that the greatness of our Creator is shown by the greatness of the means He uses to effect His object, and thereby prevented from perceiving that it is by the simplicity of the means God uses to effect His great ends that His real greatness is most apparent.

I would here remind the reader that the belief in the necessity for greatness of means is not of our time only; that we find many instances of disbelief in the simplicity of the means required for effecting God's purposes

recorded in Scripture. We have a notable example of this in the fact recorded in the fifth chapter of the Second Book of Kings, where it is stated that Naaman, the captain of the host of the king of Syria, refused to believe in the cure prescribed by Elisha, the man of God, because of its simplicity.

I would further observe, in connection with the men of God spoken of in Scripture, that notwithstanding we are led by the teaching of Churchmen to imagine that their superior intelligence was given to them supernaturally, if we carefully ponder what we find stated in Scripture concerning these men of God, we may soon come to see that their greatness was but the natural fruits or result of their hereditary obedience to the laws and commandments of God, continued from generation to generation. We find this great fact recorded in Scripture in these words, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him and keep His commandments."

These are words which tell us that there is,

in truth, no limit to that progressive moral and intellectual greatness that will follow as a natural result obedience to the laws and commandments of our Creator, *if continued from generation to generation.* Moreover, if we will carefully ponder all we find recorded concerning the doings and sayings of those ancient prophets, we may readily learn that their greatness was not the effect of inspiration or gifts supernaturally bestowed upon them, but was the fruits of their researches in true science — in other words, on their scientific knowledge of the laws and ways of Nature.

Of this we have proof in the account given to us in the Old Testament of how the ancient prophet Elijah mocked the followers of Baal, who sought by loud oral supplication to induce God to set fire to the wood they had placed upon their altar.

Elijah, as a man of science and learning, no doubt knew that there existed in the great laboratory of nature chemical substances which, when placed in contact with water,

burned; and knowing this, he thereby and therewith set fire to the wood which the men of Baal had put upon their altar, and so placed before them the most undeniable proof that his God, the God of Nature, had provided natural means for producing effects such as they had been led to believe could only be produced supernaturally, and at the solicitation of their priests. Elijah, in so doing, certainly gave to those ignorant and superstitious followers of Baal a lesson which might with much advantage to the cause of true Christianity be given to, and taken advantage of by, the many loud-voiced preachers and oral-praying priests and people of our own time.

In the third chapter of the Book of Daniel we have another example of ancient Churchism. In that chapter we find it stated that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego — three men who were skilled in all learning and science—refused to bow down and worship a golden image set up by Nebuchadnezzar the king, and were by the order of that king

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cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace, from which they made their escape unhurt.

That we may the more readily see the foundation upon which that so-called miracle probably rested, we must bear in mind that we are told those three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were skilled in all learning and science. That being so, they doubtless knew that their God, the God of Nature, had provided means by which the effect of the fire upon their bodies might, for a short time at least, be averted. That this may appear credible, let it be remembered that the Scriptural account says those three men before being cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace were by the orders of Nebuchadnezzar the king "bound up in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments;" and such having been done, may it not be reasonably inferred that the material of which these garments were made was in some degree instrumental in saving them from the effects of that fire into the midst of which the Scriptures inform us they were cast?

We know that the fibrous mineral asbestos was by the ancient Egyptians woven into cloth, and used by them as a protection from the effects of fire. Therefore, taking these recorded facts into consideration, and bearing in mind also that exaggeration characterised all the traditional accounts of the sayings and doings of those ancient men of science and learning, are we not fairly justified in assuming that the Scriptural account of the punishment awarded to those men of science and learning, and their escape from the fire into the midst of which they had been cast, were given us as examples of their power and scientific knowledge, and that the particular incident recorded in Scripture was based upon the traditional account of an occurrence resulting from the discovery made by the men of science of that day, that the mineral asbestos possessed the property of saving from destruction those who were either by accident or design exposed to the consuming effects of fire ?

I believe if we would in this way seek

for an explanation or interpretation of those so-called miraculous doings with which those ancient "men of God" are credited in Scripture, we might learn to have a higher knowledge of their real greatness, and a clearer knowledge of the wisdom, power, and greatness of God our Creator, than we shall ever have while we believe that the God-like power possessed by the prophets of old was shown in their performance of feats at variance with the ways of Nature, and having a suspicious resemblance to the performances of necromancers of much later days.

Moreover, let us always bear in mind that those who gave to us the so-called miraculous doings and sayings recorded in Scripture were men who lived long after the time when the true "men of God lived," and were those who may be described in the language of Scripture as "men who knew not Joseph." It might assist us greatly in gaining greater knowledge, and arriving at a clearer estimate of the truth contained in the figurative language of Scripture, if we would always bear in mind the

great truth that our Creator does not speak to man in human language, but only by and through the operation of His natural laws. For example, we may learn by experience and observation that we cannot with impunity eat unwholesome food, nor yet breathe impure air. Thereby we learn that God our Creator has said to man, Ye shall not eat unwholesome food, nor breathe impure air ; and that if we will do either, we shall suffer punishment for offending against these His laws and commandments.

This leads me further to observe, that when estimating the extent of good done by our manufacturers and men of commercial progress generally, we ought not to be guided by the number of hands they employ, but by the extent of obedience to the laws of health involved in the daily occupation of those who work in their factories and workshops. Our professional instructors in righteousness do not ask us to do so, and our manufacturers and men of business practically assume that, provided the amount of wages and the hours

of labour are not disturbing elements between the employed and their employers, all will be, and all will continue well.

These men forget that Nature has a voice in the matter, and will insist upon being consulted ; that unless the laws of physical and mental health are obeyed in the factory and workshop during working hours, and a proper time of rest between the hours of labour is given for the proper digesting of the food taken into the stomach, dyspepsia and all its concomitant evils will assuredly result therefrom. We cannot too fully bear all this in mind, and that the exigencies of trade will not in the least palliate offences against the laws of health.

Any man may readily obtain social importance by distributing his means in charity, and may become popular with the clergy by contributing money required by them for their schemes ; but such, he may rest assured, will not lessen the increase of crime and misery in the world. All this, observation alone may teach us. Moreover, that just as men obey

the conditions upon which God, the Author and Preserver of our being, will, through the operation of His natural laws, enable them to ascend in intelligence and moral power, so shall they become great and good ; and that just as men disobey God's natural laws, so shall they be found descending lower and lower in intelligence and moral power. This leads me to observe that in these natural results of obedience and disobedience to the natural laws and commandments of our Creator we may see the reality of that figurative condition of everlasting happiness to be enjoyed by the righteous in heaven, and that everlasting misery said to be experienced by the wicked in hell. Thus the righteous will, through continued obedience, attain to a condition of perfect practical righteousness, and consequent constitutional power of refraining from doing wrong, and so will merit and enjoy the reward of everlasting happiness ; whilst the wicked, having, through continued disobedience, fallen lower and lower in the scale of intelligence, until, becoming incurably

insane and incapable of refraining from doing evil, will sink into everlasting misery ; in other words, will be cast into the immoral darkness of hell. In order that we may see this clearly, let us bear in mind that, by the order of our being, continued obedience to God's natural laws will certainly confer upon us the constitutional power of refraining from doing wrong, and that continued disobedience will result in constitutional incapability of doing right.

When speaking of everlasting happiness and everlasting misery, it ought to be kept in view that we are not warranted by anything we are told that our Saviour said in assuming that He meant by the word "everlasting" a never-ending period of time. Were it not for the teaching of Churchmen, we should not have any difficulty in perceiving this, and that the term "everlasting," as used by Jesus Christ, had reference to the fact that our virtues and vices will, by the order of our being, naturally descend to our children, and reappear in their lives, and there-

fore that what is meant by our future state can only have reference to the reappearance of our vices and virtues in the minds and bodies of our descendants. This great truth we have placed before us in Scripture, wherein we are told that the sins of the father will be visited upon the children until the third and fourth generation, and that mercy or pardon will be shown unto thousands of them that love God and keep His commandments.

I would here observe, that were our instructors in righteousness, those who profess to be able to show all laymen the true road to salvation, to rely less upon the speculative opinions of Churchmen who lived in past times, and to place less reliance upon sincerity of believing, as proof of the truth of opinions entertained, we should be nearer to gaining a right understanding of the true character of our faith. That sincerity is not any proof of the soundness of our opinions may be abundantly shown by the fact that we shall not find greater sincerity of belief anywhere

than within the walls of our lunatic asylums. The insane patient who may there be seen strutting about as the Emperor of China, is doubtless quite sincere in believing that he is indeed that potentate, and that those who say he is not are wrong. In like manner, those professional Churchmen who persecute their brethren because of their believing in some so-called erroneous doctrine are doubtless fully persuaded they do God good service when they punish the offenders; and for conscience-sake deprive them of their means of supporting themselves and their families.

Again, when the ancient astronomer Galileo told the Churchmen of his day that the earth revolved round the sun, they would not believe him, because they had been taught to believe that the sun revolved round the earth, as it appeared to them to do. And although their sincerity placed the life of the astronomer in great danger, it did not alter the fact, that the world did then, and still does, revolve round the sun. In like manner, our professional Churchmen no doubt do most

sincerely believe that their conventional Christianity is right, and that their oral and emotional supplication for pardon for the offences committed by themselves and their flocks will be effective in procuring such pardon, but their sincerity will not ensure for them pardon for their offences, nor lessen the necessity for individual observance of the laws and commandments of Nature's God.

It might be well for all of us if our instructors in righteousness would think of this, and rely less upon the saving power of their conventional Christianity, and at the same time study physiological and psychological science more than they do. They might then be induced to rely less upon Church services as the means of making working men better and wiser, and to trust more to the saving influence of strict observance of the laws of health in the factory and workshop.

Although no one will in our day be found accusing the employers of those who spend the greater portion of their daily lives in factories and workshops, breathing impure air,

of an intention to demoralise those they employ, nevertheless demoralisation will certainly follow that disregard for the laws of God involved in the daily occupation of those who are so employed by them in the interest of Capital, regardless of the laws of health.

It will not, and cannot be denied, that many of our manufacturers and merchants are men of open-handed virtue. The many instances of their giving of their means for public purposes testify to their public benevolence, but their great liberality will not in the least lessen the injury their workpeople will experience from the violation of the laws of health involved in the mode in which they spend their working hours in the interest of Capital.

We read in the Scriptures that our Saviour Jesus Christ said, "Woe unto the world because of offences; for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." This leads me on to the inquiry whence has arisen the assumed necessity for disregarding the laws of health

in the interest of Capital? Our commercial men of progress will practically assume that we are bound to substitute machinery for manual labour, and to employ our working men and working women in large factories and workshops regardless of the laws of health, in order that they may have a good return for capital invested, and maintain our ascendancy as a manufacturing and commercial country. But why? Why should we who profess to be a Christian people, and as such more desirous of observing the laws and commandments of our Creator than of increasing our importance as a commercial and manufacturing country, assume that the substitution of machinery for manual labour is a necessity?

I believe, if our clerical instructors in righteousness were indeed what they profess to be, they would be found directing their attention more to the loss of mental and moral health involved in the substitution of machinery in the interests of Capital than to the necessity for promoting our commer-

cial and manufacturing ascendancy over other nations.

I maintain that, as true Christians, we are bound to inquire whether the substitution of machinery for manual labour, and division of labour system, and all their concomitants, have tended to raise the moral and intellectual condition of the working classes or the reverse.

When we assume that the increase of population will in a great measure account for the increased necessity that now exists for more prisons, poor-houses, and lunatic asylums, we forget that the increase of population will not alone lead to demoralisation. That there must be an increase of offences committed against the laws and commandments of our Creator before demoralisation will or can increase. Until we practically believe this, and come to see demoralisation as merely the fruit or result of offences committed against the laws of our Creator, we shall not make any progress in understanding wherein Christianity differs from Churchism.

At present, our professional instructors in righteousness, those who take the name of Jesus Christ and claim the world's respect and high social position as His ministers, are, I maintain, too fond of encouraging oral supplication as the means of obtaining pardon for offences committed by men against the laws and commandments of Nature's God, and by far too much given to encourage the young especially to believe in the efficiency of sensational preaching and sensuous worship. If we would but allow the injunction contained in Scripture in these words, "Not every one who saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," to have their proper effect upon our minds, and allow observation and the records of history to aid us in our search after Christian truth, we might soon cease to believe in those so-called religious practices, indulged in and encouraged by the clergymen of our time, who are ever seeking to obtain their own glorification and the good of the so-called Christian Church by means of sensa-

tional preaching and loud oral prayers. It would certainly be well for the cause of true Christianity that a stop were made to the many incitements to the growth of sensational preaching and loud oral prayers prevailing amongst our Salvation armies, and young men and young women's Christian Associations at the present time.

Were our clerical instructors in righteousness indeed Christian teachers, and less given to seeking their own glorification, society might be spared witnessing many of those deplorable results of fanaticism which frequently appear as the fruits of so-called religious revivalry. Upon such occasions there may be seen the sensational preacher enlisting the sympathies of his hearers by his eloquence, and leading them to believe that they are in the way of becoming practical doers of the will of God, while, in point of fact, they are simply being pleased by the preacher's eloquence wholly irrespective of the subject-matter of his discourse, there being a fascination in the human voice when elo-

quent which captivates and leads the listening mind away beyond the control of reason ; and when the popular preacher is not only eloquent as a speaker but also highly imaginative, and pictures to his audience the transcendent glories of heaven and the dismal horrors of hell, the more sensitive of his hearers will naturally become excited and ready to place any amount of faith in the truth of his imaginings. When this takes place, as it but too often does, in crowded, over-heated, and ill-ventilated halls and churches, the effect will ordinarily appear in mental and physical exhaustion, if not in hysteria and raving mania ; while the popular sensational preacher, in proportion as he is himself a believer in the delusion, will exult in these lamentable results of his eloquence, as so many striking manifestations of Divine approval of his services in "bringing sinners to repentance."

As already stated, were our clergymen indeed Christian teachers, such exhibitions as these would not occur, as fanaticism cannot

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possibly be the result of true Christian teaching. Let this be borne in mind by all, that when we become truly Christian we shall not look for supernatural aid in the work of salvation ; we will become more and more rational in our worship as we become more acquainted with God's real laws and commandments.

However essential a belief in supernatural aid may be for supporting the theory that God our Creator converses with man in human language, and for the social ascendancy of the clergy, such cannot possibly conduce to sound intelligence and moral greatness among men in general.

If we would know why our efforts to Christianise the heathen at home and abroad have so signally failed to produce practical godliness, I venture to say we should find that such failure has not resulted from want of earnestness on the part of those who have undertaken the task, but from the want of knowledge of what God's laws and commandments are. Were all those who undertake the work of instructing their fellow-men in the knowledge

of their Christian duties men of sound minds, and conversant with the will of God as it is expressed by and through His natural laws, and so able to explain when and where these are disobeyed, and how we may regain the power of rendering perfect obedience, we should all be nearer to becoming aware of what, in the language of Scripture, the will of the Lord is.

In conclusion, I must say, let us first seek the possession of a sound, well-balanced brain and its righteousness, and we may rest assured of having all wisdom and goodness given unto us.

